

BLACK MINISTRY:
A PROGRAM FOR POLITICAL ACTION

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by
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"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall
run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not
faint." (Isiah 40:31 KJV)

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This project is dedicated to:

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ABSTRACT

This project examines the various forms of racism emerging in the United States and it seeks to provide a counter movement through the mobilization of the Black church. Through the process of implementing a program of political action the Black church would seek to neutralize the devastating effects of racism on Black Americans. The Program for Political Action requires the establishment of Black Capitalism and emphasizes education as vehicles for vertical mobility.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to define a realistic program for conducting a Black ministry within a political context. The program, as outlined, is designed to serve primarily the needs of oppressed, Black congregations. I do not propose that this program can solve the needs of the entire, complicated network of minorities. (The term minorities, as used here, is exclusive of white females.) However, if adopted, the program will be flexible enough to incorporate various minority concerns.

This project will address the problem of "Neo Racism," of which the Bakke case is probably the most representative example. In a society where white males monopolize almost 90 percent of the most desirable jobs, and in a country where whites in general hold 98 percent of the most prestigious positions, it seems absurd to speak of reverse discrimination against white males.¹ But it is this new racism which undercuts and tends to

¹Robert Staples, "Land of Promise, Cities of Despair: Blacks in Urban America", The Black Scholar, x, 2 (October 1978), 8.

reverse the achievements made by Blacks during the last twenty years.

The manifestations of this resurgence are highly visible. Minority higher education may be threatened by non-affirmative interpretations of the Bakke decision. Dozens of Black and ethnic studies departments, instituted during the previous decade, are no longer in existence. Public school desegregation plans have been countered by verbal and physical attacks and been undermined by "white flight." Companies with stated, affirmative action policies have not fulfilled their commitments to hire ethnic minorities, thus negating such policies. Black unemployment under the Carter administration is higher than it was under the Ford helm. Black, male teenage unemployment was recently reported at 39.1 percent and spiraling.²

The effects of these occurrences within the black community today are ominous. Not since the days of the triangular slave trade has suicide among Black males been as high. Black on Black crime has overwhelmed the inner city social structure. The phrase "misplaced aggression" has been utilized to describe the psychological effects of racism on Black males. There is general agreement among Black psychiatrists that the

²Gloria P. Green, Richard M. Devens and Bob Whitmore, Employment Trend During 1977 (Washington: U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics), p. A-10.

burden of racism and the injustices suffered by Black males in this society is turned inward, resulting in killings among Blacks and wife beating.

Police harassment of the innocent is another major problem of Black communities. It is fostered by racism and injustice under the guise of justice. While organized crime continues to flourish, capitalizing on illicit and deadly traffic, Blacks and other ethnic minorities decry the often brutal tactics of their sworn protectors.

It is then apparent that "Neo Racism" is doubly insidious since its damaging effect on minorities is embedded in indifference. The recent rise of the women's liberation movement provides another apt example. As white women increase their vertical mobility, other ethnic minorities must fight to maintain stability. By the unjust process of lumping white women into the minority corpus, the real ethnic minorities suffer.

In this period of decreasing mobility and continuing victimization of its people, the Black church can and must provide viable solutions to minority disenfranchisement and a program for action. The framework has already been established by early pioneers of Black scholarship and culture. W.E.B. DuBois provided a perspective on Black religion which remains valid for

the present.³ E. Franklin Frazier produced a sociological study of class differences among blacks and categorized Black churches.⁴

Booker T. Washington and Richard Allen contributed in building a foundation for the Black church that Martin Luther King Jr. later utilized in the development of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Throughout the history of Black churchmen, from Daniel Payne to King, Black culture and vertical mobility have always been possible within the Black church.

To name all of the outstanding Black churchmen within the heritage of the Black church would be impossible. However, the work of those churchmen, living and dead, brought forth the fruit of today's Black theologians and churchmen.

To the Black pastor of a Black church, the issues facing minorities are paramount. They tread on the lives of his people, and they seek to devour them whole. The issues cannot be ignored by the Black pastor and they must be dealt with effectively. Black society owns, operates and controls one institution--the Black church. Therefore, Blacks look to their religious leaders to hew

³J. Deotis Roberts, "Black Theological Ethics: A Bibliographical Essay", Journal of Religious Ethics, III (1975), 78.

⁴Ibid., p. 74.

out of the mountain a stone of hope and to offer a workable solution to their problems.

THE METHOD AND SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

Within the context of this project, seven academic disciplines are utilized: history, sociology, ethics, Black theology, liberation theology, political theology and philosophy. Then, with the aid of the practical discipline of Christian education, a program for political action is developed.

The term Black capitalism will be used in the program as a phrase synonymous with political action. Black capitalism was coined by Malcolm X, to whom it meant freedom.⁵ By popular definition, Black capitalism includes the entities of business and service organizations sustained totally by Black ownership and support.

This specialized form of capitalism first became a reality in the Southern portion of the United States. During the decades of strict segregation, black capitalism came into existence as the financial means of sustaining Black communities. When integration was forced on the Southern states, Black capitalism no longer bore the burden or sustained the glory of the Black community. Now, with the rise of "Neo Racism,"

⁵Alex Haley, The Autobiography of Malcolm X (New York: Grove Press, 1964), p. 313.

Black capitalism has an opportunity and a need for rebirth.

Christian education is the vehicle which this program utilizes to mobilize political action. The popular view of Christian education as Sunday school is a distortion of the concept. In its purest form, it is designed to inform, release and free people to be aware of their situation and to take corrective action when needed. In the context of this program, Christian education will encompass a heightened understanding of the social-political-economic framework of this society, as well as a means of utilizing the vote and other forms of protest to solve the problems of Black people.

The work generated in the field of ethics and theology is crucial to this project and warrants primary consideration. Since the sheer volume of thought in this area is overwhelming, an article by Dr. J. Deotis Roberts has been scrutinized and selected works will be mentioned.⁶ The discussion which follows will seek to show the work done in the political context of ethics and theology as it pertains to the Black church. The Black ethicist and the Black theological corpus will consist of books, articles and journals written by Blacks in these fields.

⁶Roberts, p. 69.

Dr. Roberts has confirmed that Black theology and ethics are closely linked. Both disciplines are related by the problem of racism, which is both a moral and a theological problem.

Waldo Beach and George D. Kelsey were the pioneers in discerning the relevance of theology and ethics to racism. This theoretical connection was given credence by Martin Luther King, Jr., who combined ethics with theology in what he called "the trumpet of conscience." It was actually King who laid the groundwork for the practical application of theological ethics to Blacks.

Following the death of Martin Luther King, Black American scholars consistently addressed the theme of Black history and ethics. Joseph R. Washington Jr. wrote The Politics of God. William R. Jones asked, Is God A Racist? Gayraud S. Wilmore published Black Religion and Black Radicalism. From the thoughts of James Cone came Black Theology and Black Power, A Black Theology of Liberation, Spirituals and the Blues, and God of the Oppressed. Dr. C. Eric Lincoln wrote The Black Church Since Frazier, and Major Jones produced Christian Ethics for Black Theology. Dr. J. Deotis Roberts wrote Liberation and Reconciliation, followed by A Political Theology. The quest for liberation and the perplexing issue of racism were focal points of all of these books. Some included a means for achieving

liberation and of redressing some of the effects of racism. Others were descriptive of the times and prophetic in nature.

Black churchmen responded to this scholastic proliferation with definitive programs. While the SCLC continued its work in the Southern states, the National Council of Black Churchmen, under the leadership of Dr. Benjamin Payton, was organized in New York City on July 31, 1966. There were two essential differences in this Northern alliance of Black churchmen and the SCLC. First, many of its members held positions in white denominations. As the Black church became more self-conscious of its blackness, problems arose within the NCBC regarding those bretheren with white affiliations. Secondly, the founding of the NCBC represented a definite departure from the philosophy of resistance with love preached by King.

The first act of the NCBC was the publication of "Black Power," a statement by the National Committee of Negro Churchmen, which appeared in the New York Times. The goal of the organization was to clarify the record regarding Black power and the statement was addressed to four groups: to the leaders of America, to white churchmen, to Black citizens, and to the mass media.

The statement reflected the conflict between whiteness and blackness in America in terms of power, justice and love. The churchmen advocated Black

improvement despite the popular sentiment that gains already made in civil rights would be jeopardized. However, they were tactful in dissassociating themselves from other radical and militant groups waving the "Black Power" banner. Some of the most distinguished Black clergy in America signed this document.

The effect of this pronouncement was that many whites were shocked and some Black churchmen were not comfortable with such a political statement. The National Council of Churches urged white Christians to move in a "positive" direction. But Dr. C. Eric Lincoln asserted that the next communication from the Black community would be considerably more shocking and not nearly so easy to accept. He was correct in that assumption.

The next voice heard was that of James Foreman who compared the preamble of the NCBC to the "Black Manifesto," a highly Marxist orientated document. The essence of Foreman's argument was a stand against capitalism and imperialism in America, and a drive toward a socialistic society led by Black people. The crux of his proposal regarding the church involved white Christian churches and Jewish synagogues paying reparations to Black Americans.

Thus, during recent decades past, the gospel as interpreted by Black clergy for their people has swung full circle and is now embedded in other-worldliness.

There is a need for Black churchmen to conduct a dialogue with Black theologians and scholars, and to mold a new theology of Black liberation. A challenge has been issued by Joseph Washington Jr. in the Politics of God. Washington has designed a means to increase the effectiveness of the Black church by proposing that the church once more become a focal point of the community, capable of bringing its people together in a concerted political effort. He also proposes that the Black church can prod the white preconsciousness by social integration. He emphasizes the importance of Black churches uniting in the event that social inequities occur. Washington, finally, urges that Black churches cooperate with all Black organizations for the advancement of its people. The skeleton of Washington's plan, and that of other contemporary, Black theologians, will be used in the formulation of the program for political action outlined by this project.

This project is designed to accomplish three goals. The first goal is that of integrating the work of Black scholars into the network of the church. Secondly, this project seeks to delineate and disseminate the areas of Black church history, liberation theology, sociology and political theology. The third aim of this project is to synthesize theoretical concepts into a workable program for political action. The latter will be enacted within the context of Christian education.

Therefore, the basic concern is not the differing theoretical views of Black scholars and clergy. The central concern is the enactment of those positive thrusts provided by these men to combat "Neo Racism."

The second chapter consists of a brief overview of the history of the Black church. It will prove that the Black church has always addressed itself to sacred and secular concerns, and it will seek to qualify the Black ministry as both priestly and prophetic.

The third chapter will examine the classical political theories of our time as exemplified by Marx, Lenin, Freire and Soelle. The major thoughts of these classic theorists will be examined for the purpose of applying their works to the "New Racism" exhibited in this country by white society. A thorough search of their ideas is undertaken for a theme which can be utilized for the political emancipation of all people. All Black scholars educated in the academic disciplines, utilizes the classical ideas in formulating and implementing their thoughts. Therefore, it is within such a context that this chapter will function.

The concluding chapter will formulate a model for political action for the Black church. Careful consideration will be given to the social, political and economic dimensions surrounding the plight of Black people. The program, as outlined, will promote the formulation of a cohesive political bloc, and the

chapter itself will describe the need for Black capitalism as a means of economic survival. The plan involves an upgrading in the quality of Black education on the elementary, junior high and high school levels.

Finally, the two central parts of the program will be explored. The first is a training program for Blacks in skilled trades. The second is a program for adults who have not completed high school. The rehabilitation of a broken society will be discussed. White, middle class values will not be articulated. However, education for survival, within the white society, will be emphasized as a vehicle for combating "New Racism."

Chapter 2

HISTORY OF THE BLACK CHURCH

The purpose of this chapter is to show that, from its inception to the present, the Black church has been both sacred and secular in a wholistic pattern. Throughout its history the Black church has always had a two-fold purpose, and it has executed that purpose to the fullest extent of its capacities.

During the period of slavery the Black church established itself as the cultural ethos of the Black community, and that status remains valid today. Never in the chronicles of history has any system of slavery been more brutalizing and dehumanizing than the Protestant system of slavery. However, within this system of bondage, the Black church was produced. From its crude beginnings this church has evolved into a powerful mechanism which aids Black people and serves them in all facets of their lives.

The Black church has been active in politics, business, manufacturing, labor disputes, protest marches and in every secular concern of the Black community. Its most recent accomplishment was the aid given the election campaign of Jimmy Carter in his successful bid for President of the United States.

WESTERN DUALISM

Dualism is a Western concept that is inapplicable to the establishment, sustenance and operation of the Black church. The Western mind, trained to see distinctions, compare and contrast ideologies, and formulate syntheses, must remember that the origin and development of the Black church is from a monistic, wholistic tradition. Historical scholarship has proven that the Black church is both sacred and secular in an inseparable pattern.⁷ Its uniqueness transcends the categories of white, Western dualism and, through synthesis and fusion, maintains the cultural ethos of Blacks.

The roots of the Black church are deep within the African religions where its spirituality originated, and from which it has established a solid foundation.

Before the beginning of the slave trade, most West Africans were neither Christians nor Mohammedans. Although Islam overthrew Christianity in the Arabic North, the majority of Black Africa was and still is involved in traditional African religions. This is true, to a large extent, even among the confessing

⁷John V. Taylor, The Primal Vision (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 72.

African Christians of today.

African thought is depicted in symbolic, spiritual, wholistic style, without separating the sacred from the secular. John V. Taylor submits the following as an example of this wholistic thought.

It permeates the consciousness of African thinkers and writers even after long acquaintance with the Western world. The poet who writes, "I saw the sky in the evening-snow, cotton, flowers and seraphims wings and sorcerers' plumes," is speaking out of a mystical awareness of the actual affinity of things which survive amongst us only as metaphor in the studied effects of surrealism. No distinction can be made between sacred and secular, between natural and supernatural, for nature, Man and unseen are inseparably involved in one another in a total community.⁸

WHOLISTIC THOUGHT

In African religions no distinctions are made between the sacred and the secular. The two are fused into a wholistic monism. Africans conceive of religion as community with God and with all of creation. Therefore, in the African tradition, religion permeates all of the dimensions of life.

A note of explanation is applicable here. John White, an anthropologist at Youngstown State University, has said: "There is no such thing as a primitive religion or culture."⁹ Therefore, the word

⁸Ibid.

⁹John White, Lecture at Youngstown State University.

primitive, when referring to African traditional religions, will not be found in this discussion.

When defining the wholistic pattern of African spirituality, Joseph Washington Jr. proposes the following:

The special character of the black cult is not its content but its intent, for the cult is a synthesis of Western Christianity's beliefs, practices, ceremonies, rituals, and theologies with the African tradition of religion as permeating all dimensions of life, without final distinction between the sacred and the secular.¹⁰

In the Black religion, which developed on American soil, the roots of African religions remained significantly intact. Perplexed historians have asked how the slaves could experience dehumanization and cultural destruction while maintaining their spiritual vitality. The answer is rooted in the African concept of monism or life as a meaningful, wholistic pattern.

In the chronicles of history, white Protestantism fostered the most brutalizing system of slavery known to man. Never had any oppressed, enslaved group had its cultural heritage so assaulted-forbidden to speak their language or to practice their religion in a country which proclaimed religious freedom.

BLACK SPIRITUALS

Through ingenuous adaptation, Black slaves

¹⁰ Joseph R. Washington, Jr., Black Sects and Cults (New York: Doubleday, 1972), p. 20.

fused African culture with white Protestantism's Jewish Bible, forming a Black religion. Out of this fusion of culture and religion emerged the only unique entity in American literature-the Black spiritual.

Storytelling is important in African culture and there are forms of storytelling in the spirituals, the blues and in Black preaching. The spirituals were used for three main, secular reasons: (1) to express the desire for freedom; (2) to express the yearning for justice from the oppressor and; (3) to provide, in code, the tactic by which the slave could escape. Further, all of these secular uses were permeated by deep, sacred concerns.

The wholistic pattern can readily be seen by this unashamed use of the spiritual to gain worldly freedom. The fusion of sacred and secular occurs in the following examples. While the master believed that the slaves were advocating mystical escapism while singing "Steal away to Jesus," they were also advocating escape from the plantation or announcing a forbidden meeting for prayer and plotting. Within the context of a spiritual, words had coded meanings. Satan was the person who cheated the slaves. King James was whoever helped the oppressed and disenfranchised or gave them the right to life. Hell was being sold South. Jordan was the border of freedom or the boundary of life

and death. Heaven was earthly freedom in Canada or Africa.¹¹

James H. Cone quotes from Miles Mark Fischer as saying:

The spirituals are the story of black people's historical strivings for earthly freedom, rather than the otherworldly projections of hopeless Africans who forgot about their homeland. The songs tell a historical story of how Negroes attempted to spread brotherhood by the sword, took flight to better territory when possible, became pacific in the United States, and laid hold upon another world as a last resort.¹²

Among numerous other purposes, Black spirituals served as the impetus to what DuBois called the "frenzy" or shouting. This phenomenon was both a dance and a chant and was used to make the master think the slaves were worshiping while the noise actually covered the sounds of escape. The wholistic African pattern of religion can be further seen in this shouting in that the ultimate in sacred mysticism was employed for secular ends.

The priest-doctor in African, traditional religion combined sacred religion and secular medicine. He later evolved into the slave plantation, priest-doctor-precursor and finally into the Black preacher of today. From African religion, through slavery, to the present, the Black preacher has served as a sacred and

¹¹James H. Cone, The Spirituals and the Blues (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), p. 16.

¹²Ibid., p. 15.

secular resource in the Black church and as a father figure.

W. E. B. DuBois was one of the first black scholars to detail this evolution.

The vast power of the priest in the African state has already been noted; his realm alone--the province of religion and medicine--remained largely unaffected by the plantation system in many important particulars. The Negro priest, therefore, early became an important figure on the plantation and found his function as the interpreter of the supernatural, the comforter of the sorrowing, and as the one who expressed, rudely, but picturesquely, the longing and disappointment and resentment of a stolen people.¹³

As free, Black congregations developed, they further extended the link already established between the concerns of the world and those of the spirit.

Black church-goers have a tradition of dressing immaculately to attend Sunday morning services. The Saturday night pleasure seeker dresses similarly to pursue his or her pleasure. The celebrative spirit and the musical tempo for religious and entertainment functions have remained identical.

BLACK, ANGLO-SAXON ASSIMILATIONISTS

While all Blacks of African ancestry shared a culture of wholistic, religious thought, not all former slaves desired to retain their cultural base. Through

¹³W. E. B. DuBois, Atlanta University Pub.
No. 8 (Atlanta: Atlanta University Press, 1903), p. 5.

the process of assimilation, numerous "house niggers" reoriented their life styles to the Anglo Saxon culture of the oppressor. Many of this group were the illicit result of the interbreeding of the races, and could easily have been mistaken for whites. They became the Black elite, dividing themselves from the "field niggers." With a white cultural head start, this Black Anglo Saxon class emerged out of slavery and established businesses and colleges throughout the South. They adopted the norms of the Anglo Saxon culture, and practiced and taught their life style. Many still regard themselves as superior to other Blacks while accepting a lower status in the eyes of whites. They frequently attend white churches and have rejected the tradition of the African priests.

But the present Black church of the masses continues to be the strongest institution in Black America, and it retains the cultural heritage of the past. The Black church grew out of necessity and it has remained and survived because of the needs that still exist. It is the cultural matrix that was established to combat racist forces and to sustain oppressed Black people.

INCEPTION OF THE BLACK CHURCH

Only in the light of oppression, disenfranchisement and enforced separatism can the Black church

be understood as the means to an end. From its inception the Black church was the agent of protest against discriminative and oppressive structures that inflicted pain and suffering on the Black community. It was through this sacred and secular institution that control, aid and concern for the present and future welfare of the Black masses were established.

The formative years of the Black church can be traced to the late 1800's and St. George's Methodist Church in Philadelphia. There Blacks had aided the whites in purchasing land and building an edifice. But when the structure was completed, racism which had been subtle became blatant. During the building process, Blacks sat in the pews with whites. When the church was completed the Blacks sat around the walls in chairs. As the Black worshipers began to outnumber the whites, the latent racism surfaced.

The crisis that precipitated the first Black church occurred with the interruption of Absalom Jones, who was kneeling in prayer. When a trustee attempted to force him to his feet, Jones asked that the trustee wait until the prayer was completed. The two men exchanged words and, when the prayer ended, Richard Allen, Absalom Jones and the Black church members walked out of St. George's and formed the Free African Society. The year was 1787. This split soon resulted in the first

Black Episcopal church in America. Rev. Richard Allen later formed the African Methodist denomination in 1816. The African Methodist Episcopal Church, in doctrine and government, was identical to the white Methodist Episcopal church except in the area of secular concerns. Allen's motivations for establishing the AME church were both religious and racial/secular.¹⁴

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RICHARD ALLEN

Richard Allen believed that the Black community could become self-sufficient and self-sustaining. He was instrumental in convening the first Black civil rights convention to achieve that end in Philadelphia, and later a national convention was held.¹⁵ Bishop Allen, through these conventions, sought to alleviate the sufferings of Blacks in America through group endeavors. He preached an other worldly gospel and refused to demonize the "enemy."

Gayraud S. Wilmore describes Allen's philosophy as follows:

Allen believed that the Black community had to be organized to deal responsibly with its own problems, as long as American prejudice and indifference refused to erase the color line. And he also believed that an independent Black church, which made

¹⁴Gayraud S. Wilmore, Black Religion and Black Radicalism (New York: Doubleday, 1972), p. 134.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 133-135.

every aspect of life its field of witness, was the most effective instrument among Black people with which to pursue the twin goals of spiritual holiness and civil freedom.¹⁶

Charles H. Wesley gives an example of Richard Allen in action.

Richard Allen was active in the organization of a Free Produce Society of Philadelphia. The object of this organization was the purchase of produce grown by free labor only. Its members pledged themselves to make purchases only from merchants who refused to sell slave labor produce. This society grew out of an assembly of colored people at Richard Allen's church on December 20, 1830.¹⁷

Allen, the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, provided a base from which the Black church emerged into society as a Black-supported, Black-owned entity. The institutional Black church was established in the heat of racial injustice and crisis, and addressed itself to the twin goals of spiritual and secular liberty. From this beginning the Black church grew into the cultural center of the Black community.

The ramification of the emergence of the Black church are phenomenal. First, its inception served as the impetus for the establishment of Black power that would surface during the civil rights movement. Secondly, it became the only Black owned, Black-controlled institution in America. Finally, it served

¹⁶Ibid., p. 134.

¹⁷Charles H. Wesley, Richard Allen Apostle of Freedom (Washington: Associated, 1935), p. 239.

as the all encompassing cultural center for Black people. Richard Allen died March 26, 1831, the year of the Nat Turner revolt.

THE RELIGIOUS INSURRECTIONISTS

One of the most celebrated figures in Black history, among Black intellectuals and militants, is Nat Turner. Historically, plantation uprisings were frequent occurrences in the South. However, in the extraordinary case of Nat Turner, the insurrection bore a religious form. Nat Turner discovered an important concept about the Judeo-Christian faith that white Christians had attempted to conceal from the slaves. Gayraud S. Wilmore explains Turner's revelation as follows:

The God of the Bible demanded justice and, to know him and his Son, Jesus Christ, was to be set free from every power on earth.¹⁸

Turner possessed the unique quality of natural intelligence and spiritual power. He bore the marks of an African superstition that labeled him a priest or medicine man. From his childhood his parents felt that he was "called" to be the Moses of Black people--to free them of the oppressive forces that constrained and afflicted their lives. Further, Nat Turner was a preacher who was armed with the ability to read, write and think.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 18.

Considering the malicious impact of slavery on his people, Turner sought to relieve them from their pain and agony. Assuredly, his methods have been criticized by white society. However, Nat Turner had successfully combined the teachings and actions of Jesus Christ and Toussaint L. Ouverture, the Black liberator of Haiti, into a wholistic pattern. Turner believed that he was the Messiah. The day of judgment was the launching of his insurrection. Jerusalem was the county seat from which he planned to take control of Southampton, Virginia. His cross was represented by his hanging gallows.

It is important to note that Nat Turner's insurrection was minimized by whites who did not want a "killer" esteemed in the eyes of the Black slaves. For Turner had emulated Ouverture by commanding a group of seventy disciples and killing fifty-seven whites in a violent confrontation. But historians have rated the Nat Turner revolt as second only to that of John Brown in relation to its impact on American history.

The religious insurrectionists also include Denmark Vesey and Gabriel Prosser, both Black churchmen. Prior to the freeing of the slaves, the A.M.E. church had established itself as a violent, radical element in the South. When the insurrections of Vesey and Prosser were crushed, largely due to hesitancy and betrayal on

the part of some Blacks, the hope of gaining freedom through revolt was lost to the Black church. The religious insurrectionists were killed, and the Black church began to search for another path to freedom.

THE BLACK CHURCH IN THE NORTH

The Black church in the North was chiefly responsible for the operation and maintenance of the underground railroad and for the Abolition Movement. The principal Black church which fostered these operations was the African Methodist Episcopal Zion denomination. According to Wilmore:

From its founding, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was engaged in the struggle of the slaves for freedom. Its congregations along the Mason Dixon line were known as underground railroad stations for escaped slaves. Catherine Harris, Thomas James, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Jermain Louguen and Sojourner Truth were all associated with the Zionite activity against slavery.¹⁹

One of the most outstanding characters of the underground railroad was Harriet Tubman, who freed an uncountable number of slaves. Her allegiance was twofold as she was a member of the A.M.E. Zion church and the "Moses" of the underground railroad. William Still's elaborate description of her as "Moses" is as follows:

Harriet Tubman had been their "Moses," but not in the sense that Andrew Johnson was the "Moses" of the colored people. She had faithfully gone down into

¹⁹Ibid., p. 121.

Egypt and had delivered these six bondsmen by her own heroism. Harriet was a woman of no pretensions, indeed, a more ordinary specimen of humanity could hardly be found among the most unfortunate-looking farm hands of the South. Yet, in point of courage, shrewdness and disinterested exertions to rescue her fellowmen, by making personal visits to Maryland among the slaves, she was without equal.²⁰

The Black abolitionist preachers of the North utilized scripture to illustrate the wrongs of slavery and the need for change in the system that advocated it. Wilmore has provided the following evaluation:

Thus the Black abolitionist preachers of the Nineteenth century, undaunted by the ethnology of the anthropologist Louis Agassiz of Harvard and the testimony of many religious books and pamphlets on Negro inferiority, stubbornly relied upon what had been ineradicable characteristics of Black religion in America--an interpretation of Scripture based upon the perceptions and experience of race.²¹

The Black preachers of the North utilized their experiences in Blackness and the scriptural passages as an argument against slavery. Some Black preachers, however, went beyond a verbal attack and called for insurrection. Henry Highland Garnet was a fiery, noble preacher who invited the slaves to pursue insurrection in his celebrated speech, "Address to the Slaves of the United States."

²⁰William Still, The Underground Railroad (New York: Arno Press, 1968), pp. 296-297.

²¹Ibid., p. 166.

Tell them in language which they cannot misunderstand of the exceeding sinfulness of slavery, and of a future judgment, and of the righteous retribution of an indignant God. Inform them that all you desire is freedom, and that nothing else will suffice. Do this, and forever after cease to toil for the heartless tyrants, who give you no other reward but stripes and abuse. If they then commence work of death, they and not you will be responsible for the consequences. You had far better all die--die immediately, than live slaves and entail your wretchedness upon your posterity. If you would be free in this generation, here is your only hope. However much you and all of us may desire it, there is not much hope of redemption without the shedding of blood. If you must bleed, let it all come at once--rather die freemen than live to be slaves. It is impossible, like the children of Israel, to make a grand exodus from the land of bondage. The Pharaohs are on both sides of the blood-red waters.²²

Garnet believed that insurrection was the answer to the perplexing problem of slavery. Frederick Douglass, a lay member of the A.M.E. Zion church, could not accept this view and believed that part of the answer could be found in the integration of the churches. But while Black preachers in the North debated the most viable means for attaining freedom, the forces of the white majority were taking action in the South.

THE INVISIBLE INSTITUTION

Following the rebellions of Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey and Gabriel Prosser, stringent restrictions were placed upon Black preachers in the South. They were enjoined from using their sermons to unite the Black

²²Ibid., p. 131.

masses against suppression, and the integration of Black churches was instituted. The principal reason for this integration was to facilitate the application of social controls which the whites felt would place a damper on insurrection and plantation rebellions. Dr. Benjamin Mays has provided the following information.

When, because of the insurrectionary movement led by certain blacks like Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner, it became unpopular to teach Negroes to read and the educated white persons were not willing to supply this lack of religious workers among the blacks, there was no longer hope for ordinary religious instruction. This reaction was unusually disastrous to the Negro preacher when it was noised abroad that Nat Turner was a minister. The rumor attached to Negro ministers throughout the South the stigma of using preaching as a means to incite their race to insurrection.²³

James H. Cone adds a further footnote to this occurrence.

And after the Nat Turner revolt, black preachers were declared illegal in most southern states.²⁴

The grip of white backlash on the Black churches was not relaxed until after the emancipation of the slaves. However, the Black church continued to function even during this era of grave repression as an invisible institution, utilizing coded rebellion and the underground railroad as means to freedom. (The spirituals served as the code for planning and executing secret

²³ Benjamin Mays, The Negro's Church (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1933), p. 29.

²⁴ Cone, p. 122.

meetings.) Although the Black preacher was forbidden to preach in some southern states, his political influence was retained among the slaves. The Black church in the South ceased, for a period, its covert operations, thus becoming an almost invisible institution.

RECONSTRUCTION

The Black church proceeded to enter the arena of politics, business and education following Reconstruction. Again the Black preacher rose to prominence as the leader of the flock and the secular director of the masses. Throughout the North and the South, Black preachers guided their congregations toward socio-political-economic power. In the North, James Poindexter, a noted Black preacher, issued a challenge to Black pastors and to their congregations.

Nor can the preacher more than any other citizen plead his religious work or the sacredness of that work as an exemption from duty. Going to the Bible to learn the relation of the pulpit to politics, and to learn the relation of the pulpit to politics, and accepting the prophets, Christ and the apostles and the pulpit of their times, and their precepts and examples as the guide of the pulpit today, I think that the conclusion will be that wherever there is sin to be rebuked, no matter by whom committed, and ill to be averted, or good to be achieved by our country and mankind, there is a place for the pulpit to make itself felt and heard. The truth is, all the help the preachers and all other good and worthy citizens can give by taking hold of politics is needed in order to keep the

government out of bad hands and secure the ends for which governments are formed.²⁵

ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOLS

Prior to the Civil War, Black colleges had been established in the North. These institutions were chiefly industrial, but they did thrive and eventually expanded in academic scope. The driving impetus behind these schools was Black churchmen who had long recognized education as a vital tool for the Black masses. Ruby F. Johnston documented some of these early efforts.

The American Missionary Association, an inter-denominational society organized before the Civil War, erected Negro Colleges, Hampton being opened in 1861. Lincoln University was established by a Presbyterian minister in 1854. The African Methodist Episcopal Church, outstanding in educational work, opened Union Seminary in 1847, and in 1856 united with the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, in establishing Wilberforce. In 1863 the African Methodist Episcopal Church became the sole owner of Wilberforce, and after the Civil War founded many schools and colleges.²⁶

Ruby Johnston provides further elaboration.

Negro churchmen have, during all stages of religion, facilitated the establishment and maintenance of Negro educational institutions.²⁷

²⁵William J. Simmons, Men of Mark (Chicago: Johnson, 1970), pp. 261-262.

²⁶Ruby F. Johnston, The Development of Negro Religion (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), p. 39.

²⁷Ibid., p. 40.

BUSINESS

But the Black church has not contented itself with solely spiritual and intellectual pursuits. Black churches have long recognized that they have a duty to provide impetus in all areas which concern their congregations.

Black church interests in business activities range from ownership in restaurants, to small manufacturing companies, to stock holdings. In Dublin, Georgia, for example, the First African Baptist Church (with Rev. H. B. Johnson as pastor) operates a tennis shoe manufacturing plant in connection with the Uniroyal Rubber Company. The Washington Street Presbyterian Church, also in Dublin, with Dr. Chester B. Johnston as pastor, owns controlling stock in the Teachers' Insurance Agency of Georgia. Black churches recognize and are meeting the economic needs of their members. They are fostering businesses, assuring employment for the Black masses, and answering what they deem a call to feed the bodies as well as the souls of their flock.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The first signs of resistance shown by Blacks to white oppression occurred during the journey to America when some uncounted, unnamed Blacks jumped

overboard rather than submit to slavery. Black history has proven that the Civil Rights Movement has always existed in the United States in some form. Black churches, historically and into the present, have remained in the forefront of this struggle.

The origin of the Black church's involvement in the Civil Rights Movement was conceived by Richard Allen and nourished by untold Blacks of every denomination. The Black Church has produced such organizations as the Deacons for the Defense and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. But it was not until Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. rose to prominence through the Montgomery Boycott (which was anchored in the Black church) that the Civil Rights Movement acquired a trumpeter. It is not surprising, considering the historical overview of Black history, that this recent occurrence of concerted, Black protest utilized the Black church as a springboard.

Lerone Bennett commented on this occurrence:

The peculiar genius of Martin Luther King is that he was able to translate religious fervor into social action, thereby creating political leadership under the rubric of his religious ministry . . . under . . . conditions of extreme danger and liability.²⁸

²⁸Lerone Bennett, What Manner of Man (Chicago: Johnson, 1964), p. 147.

THE BLACK CHURCH TODAY

The contemporary Black church of the masses is still struggling in the quicksand of racism and injustice. It still fights against the pricks of a cold, inhumane society, ushering in new forms of social resistance, while pursuing an ever present quest for equality in America.

Dr. Amos Jones Jr., a graduate of Vanderbilt University Divinity School and pastor of the Westwood Baptist Church of Nashville, Tennessee, is typical of many black ministers who have extended their spiritual calling to secular pursuits. Currently, a grave concern among such pastors is the status of public schools in America. To illustrate this extended involvement of the Black church, a news item from the Westwood Tableau is included.

BLACK MINISTERS OPPOSE METRO SCHOOL PLAN

The social committee of the Interdenominational Ministers' Fellowship released a statement opposing the recently publicized plan to phase out virtually all inner-city schools. The statement was drafted and sent to the director of schools, members of the board of directors for Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, and the printed and electronic press. At a special call meeting Saturday, December 18, 1976, the Social Action Committee of the Interdenominational Ministers' Fellowship unanimously approved the following resolution: That we strongly oppose the Secondary School Plan and the Alternative Elementary plan of the Metropolitan Public Schools

as implicitly racist and detrimental to the educational welfare of the black school children and the well being of the black community as a whole. Further, it is urgent that no action be undertaken towards their implementation.

The members of the Social Action Committee of the Interdenominational Ministers Fellowship are: Dr. Amos Jones Jr., chairman, Rev. Kelly Miller Smith, Rev. James C. Turner, Rev. John Corry, and Rev. Michael L. Graves, president.²⁹

SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION

From the point of inception until the present day, the Black church has remained secular and sacred in a wholistic pattern. Bishop Richard Allen produced the foundation from which the Black church has grown and prospered. Necessity played an important role in the origination and maintenance of this church. Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey and Gabriel Prosser brought the Black church through the violent era of protest. Henry Highland Garnet, among others, advocated the use of violence in view of an inescapable system of racism, brutality and injustice on both sides of the shore.

The Black church has endured the test of survival even against resistance. It has molded out of the marred clay of repression a symbol of stability. Throughout its history the music, the preacher and the congregation of the Black church were forceful voices in proclaiming that

²⁹Amos Jones, Jr. (ed.) "Black Ministers Oppose Metro School Plan" Westwood Tableau, Church Newsletter (November 1976).

people of color were "somebody." Throughout the week the Black masses often worked at menial jobs. However, on Sunday morning these masses acquired social status through an institution which recognized their worth and applauded their efforts at betterment. Though Blacks were often poor, tired, lonely, bitter, angry and uninspired, on Sunday morning they are instilled with a particle of hope.

The Black church has produced such as Aretha Franklin, Nat King Cole and Gladys Knight. It has fostered Black businessmen and has built schools and produced teachers. It has given scholarships and other financial aid to students. It has played an important role in the Civil Rights Movement, serving as a base for operations and protest. The Black church has served as a political advisor to its congregations and as a social service organization in the midst of difficult times.

Indeed, the Black church is the cultural ethos of the Black community. This is not to say that the Black church is a perfect institution. It has experienced internal and external problems which have crippled it numerous times in history. However, if Blacks did not have the Black church, they would lose a major refuge and ally against racism, brutality and injustice.

In conclusion, the Black church has always been secular and sacred in an inseparable monism, and it

shall remain so in the future. Perhaps, in the words
of Martin L. King,

The sons of former slaves and former slaveowners
will sit at the table of brotherhood and be judged
not by the color of their skins, but by the content
of their character.

This is the dream of the Black church--that someday we
will be able to worship together, pray together, sing
together, and all be Americans with equal rights.

Chapter 3

POLITICAL EMANCIPATION

The purpose of this chapter is to view the various possibilities for political emancipation. It is by no means an exhaustive account of the theories and actions proposed to deal with the problem of making political emancipation a reality. It is only the views of a few prominent thinkers that I seek to air at this time. These views begin with Karl Marx and Lenin, and continue with Freire and Soelle.

Political emancipation is a futuristic goal in terms of this worldly and other-worldly objective. However, the essence of political emancipation is not a false utopia or cultic religious activity. It is the freedom of the people to choose their won destinies and not be forced to succumb to the dictates of society.

Perhaps, when given serious contemplation, political emancipation is a dream that oppressed or exploited minorities envision for the future. The hope of political emancipation is unnecessary for those who have risen through the various strata of society and look back at their origins. Some might even be happy to forget those caught in the net of exploitation and oppression. Others have lost too much to ignore the

barriers to opportunity thrown up by disenfranchisement. It is to those who refuse to accept society as it is and seek to transform it into a decent place for all that political emancipation is a crucial concern.

Why political emancipation? Because, if a group of people are politically free, then at least the opportunity and means of freeing themselves in other respects is available. Perhaps I have not given enough attention to the scholars of the past or present. Perhaps the situation is not as intricate as I perceive it. Granted, these options may be apparent. However, I have tried to extract the central ideas pertaining to political emancipation and apply them to another situation. Through the process of exegesis and hermeneutics I will deal with the works of those authors specified and relate them directly to the problem of Neo Racism in America.

KARL MARX

According to Karl Marx's essay, "On the Jewish Question," political emancipation encompasses three dimensions. These dimensions are political, economic and social.³⁰ I will elaborate primarily on the political dimension expressed in this essay, although Marx argues that this is insufficient. However, at

³⁰Karl Marx, Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society (New York: Anchor), p. 216.

certain junctions the social and economic elements will be aired to support the theme.

Marx proposed that the state is an organism separated from the individual, and that the individual is a private or personal organism. Perhaps the state or government should be the totality of all the existing organisms. Theoretically, the state should serve civil society and beyond that the realm which is community.

It is true that the beliefs of Judaism and Christianity should constitute community. The appropriated definition of community would be public ownership or participation in common. The essential question is: Do Christianity and Judaism formulate a community consciousness regarding the public, or do they foster the "we" group concept? Generally, Christianity and Judaism both have their separate communities. More specifically, Christianity is a conglomerate community composed of various denominations or sub-communities operating under the banner of Christianity.

It is here that political emancipation is parallel to human emancipation, because Marx introduced a radically different formula of political emancipation in his Jewish question essay. The following quotation will serve to clarify the economic and social dimensions of political emancipation.

Marx regards political emancipation through a state with universal rights of conscience, property and

equality, as a step forward. But it denotes religion and property to "Civil Society," the private realm where man is egoistic, separated from his fellows, and alienated from himself in commodities and money as shown in politically emancipated America. Life in civil society is epitomized in Judaism, which is perfected in Christianity. This has been seen as Marx's anti-semitism, but his essential animus was against the dehumanizing alienation of civil society. With exclusively political emancipation, Marx argues the state as a commodity uniting man remains alien and abstract. For full emancipation, man must achieve community in everyday life and work, thus transcending the political state even with the universal rights of man.³¹

Marx is arguing basically for the community of mankind. This community would consist of one common bond, inclusive of all people living in that particular country. Then, according to Marx, man would achieve political emancipation parallel to human emancipation. However, this theory is definitely an abstract one while Marx's other writings show that he was basically a concrete philosopher. Further, he admitted that this theory was still in an abstract form, having at the time never materialized into a concrete entity.

The center of this antithesis is the question of Judaism or Christianity being the religion of the state. If the religion of the state is Christianity, it will not be able to emancipate the Jews and vice versa. Bauer extends the solution to the ultimate by requesting that both Christians and Jews give up their religions,

³¹Ibid.

which is virtually impossible even for the so called good of the state. The secular attitude exhibited in Marx's essay is shown when he stated, "The political emancipation of the Jew, the Christian, or the religious man generally is the emancipation of the state from Judaism, from Christianity, from religion in general."³²

The abolishment of religion from the state would supposedly eliminate religious bias. This proposal is not completely accurate, because each state has its own form of religion. It is commonly referred to as civil religion whether it exists in America, Russia, Germany or England. All countries have a form of civil religion. By abolishing Judaism and Christianity the state would devise a form of religion through the communal form of existence. This new form of the state religion would take the shape of communism.

In the opinion of Karl Marx, Jews will always operate within a system as a sub-culture. Jews are not full citizens in terms of being totally politically emancipated because they are foreigners within the state. Although the German Jews were not free, neither are the German laborers and other third world people. Therefore, Marx's stringent argument and comments against the Jews are understandable given his assumptions. But they are

³²Ibid., p. 218.

not justified if ultimate allegiance is given to God rather than the state.

The arguments, such as the materialistic and the social separation employed by the Jews, can also be defended if the state is to be divided into two segments: public and private realm. In this context the Jews would participate in public affairs, politics and practice their religion in the private realm. This plan is feasible both for Jews and for the state. Then religion steps out of the ethos into the periphery of the state.

Basically, the Jews view political emancipation as freedom from the oppressive society in which they exist. Marx viewed political emancipation not solely in terms of Jews, but in terms of laborers and all of mankind, thus formulating a classless society. Marx defined political emancipation as "a reduction of man to a member of civil society, to an egoistic independent individual on the one hand and to a citizen, a moral person on the other."³³

For Marx it was essential that community is formulated to bring forth political emancipation. However, Marx injected an important statement: "All emancipation is restoration of the human world and the

³³Ibid., p. 214.

relationships of men themselves."³⁴ This definition is inclusive of the social dimensions; however, underlying both of these theories is economics. If man is a full participant of the community, there would be concern for fellow human beings, and this concern could be called human emancipation.

Marx actually took political emancipation one step farther into the realm of human emancipation. When man has become a full citizen, participating within the social power sphere in his relationships and everyday life, and refusing to separate social power from political power, then human emancipation is complete. This abstract citizen must be involved in the community building effort to formulate a total unit of citizenship which will not distinguish social power from political power. Then, for Marx was emancipation complete.

Perhaps the ideal Marx was striving to convey is on the threshold of a totalitarian society, or it shall forever remain in the abstract. Marx's abstract concept of human emancipation is supposedly the ideal situation for all people. However, it fails to take into account the importance of religion to the Jews, Christians and other people. To remove a God or religion from the masses would cause disruption and rejection of the state

³⁴Ibid.

which Marx proposed. Thus, two revolutions would take place--one against the present state and the other against a totalitarian state that refuses to permit freedom for anyone. This plan is then inadequate because of the denial of religious freedom and the rejection of capitalism and free enterprise.

VLADIMIR I. LENIN

Lenin offered the continuing chapters to the Marxian theory of imperialism. Lenin's basic definition of imperialism is the process of transferring wealth from poor to rich countries. Lenin explained imperialism in the Twentieth century as the dividing casualty which permeated the world.

The imperialism of the beginning of the Twentieth century completed the division of the world among a handful of states, each of which today exploits (i.e., draws super-profits from) a part of the world only a little smaller than that which England exploited in 1858. Each of them, by means of trusts, cartels, finance capital, and debtor and creditor relations, occupies a monopoly position in the world market. Each of them enjoys to some degree a colonial monopoly.³⁵

In the opinion of Lenin, capitalist monopolies occupy first place in economics and politics. Therefore, the division of the world is completed. Thus Lenin's formula: finance - capital and imperialism = war.

³⁵ Joseph Petulla, Christian Political Theology (New York: Orbis, 1972), p. 65.

However, at this point, Lenin throws light on the poor peasant who knows nothing about politics, and is called to fight a war. The peasant is nothing more than a tool manipulated by the government to wage war. Here the depersonalization process is shown by Lenin in terms of exploitation and class division. However, Lenin extracted this from within the context of the countries, and placed it in the international arena. The terms oppressor and oppressed are revised by Lenin to read exploiter and oppressed.³⁶ According to Lenin, all classes need each other for true human fulfillment and he opted for a classless society. Lenin utilized the thoughts of Marx and Engels when he said, "No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations."³⁷ Thus Lenin definitely belonged within the Marxian tradition.

Lenin admitted that, once oppression is removed from the oppressed, there is a tendency for the oppressed to take on the characteristics of the exploiter. The following will serve to clarify this thought.

But it is incomparably more difficult to abolish classes; we still have the division into workers and peasants. If the peasant is installed on his plot of land and appropriates his surplus grain, that is, grain that he does not need for himself or for his cattle, while the rest of the people have to go without bread, then the peasant becomes an exploiter. The more grain he clings to, the more profitable he finds it; as for the rest, let

³⁶ Ibid., p. 67.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 68.

them starve: "The more they starve, the dearer I can sell this grain."³⁸

Lenin was aware of the difficulty in abolishing classes within the social-political-economic arena. The oppressed internalize the character of the exploiter and, when the oppressed were placed in the position where they could exploit, they did. In actuality, Lenin was seeking to build community. However, it is a concept which individuals do not readily accept. Lenin felt that all must work together in a cooperative manner, not in an individualistic approach to economic gain. It appears to be possible theoretically but impossible in the realm of practicality.

It is here that Lenin went beyond Marx. Marx did not grapple with the practical problems of transforming political, economic and social relationships in a particular societal context. Lenin addressed himself to exactly that problem.

Lenin advocated freedom of discussion and the right for minority opinion to exist within the party. However, he insisted upon unity and action. This idea is called democratic centralism and has a two-fold meaning: (1) freedom of discussion and, (2) unity of action.

Lenin believed that economic struggle would

³⁸Ibid., p. 125.

provide the impetus for the masses to engage in political struggle. This theory is excellent in terms of drawing the masses. Yet Lenin realized that, once the masses were free from the exploiter, they needed to be educated in the community. Unlike Lenin, Paulo Freire began with the intent of educating the peasants toward the goal of political and human emancipation.

PAULO FREIRE

Freire was aware that the oppressed desire the life-style of the oppressor. This situation exists because the only model which is available to the oppressed is that of the dominant group. Therefore, in the eyes of the oppressed, the life-style of the oppressor is the so-called "good society." Freire sought to guide the oppressed to define a different model that would serve their cause and not perpetuate oppression.

Freire wrote out of his experience in educating oppressed people. These people are rated on the socio-economic scale as peasants, or bottom level individuals. They are characterized as poor, uneducated and full of self-depreciation which serves as the anchor which holds them in the quicksand of captivity. From this observation the people are dehumanized by the oppressors for the oppressors for the purpose of economic gain. Actually it is the oppressor who gains by perpetuating

false generosity. The circumstances surrounding this inhuman situation are fostered by the peasants' fear of freedom, and by their lack of knowledge regarding what freedom is and how to gain it. Freire defines freedom as follows:

Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of men; not is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion.³⁹

Freire identified an important problem of the oppressed and, through the process of education, sought to transform existing models of oppression into new models of liberation. This is a situation whereby people must struggle to regain their humanity. Freire seeks to give the oppressed the impetus to free themselves mentally from the chains of the oppressors. In turn, they would then free themselves from socio-political-economic dehumanization. He sought to achieve this through the process of teaching the peasants what he termed, "Praxis reflection and action upon the world to transform it."⁴⁰ The oppressed would then come to grips with reality and formulate ways to relieve themselves of the domestication in which they live.

³⁹Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Seabury Press, 1970), p. 31.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 36.

Freire developed a two-stage plan to bring about the liberation of the oppressed.

In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all men in the permanent liberation.⁴¹

Freire utilized the method of exposure to the concrete entities of oppression, emasculation and domestication to bring forth new models of existence. He did not advocate overthrowing the peasant government through force. Instead, he sought to utilize political power through government to achieve the desired results. Nor did he strive for a utopian existence on earth, as did Lenin, because he advocated the permanent liberation of all people. Thus, Freire recognized the intricate problem of two-fold oppression, and suggested as a remedy that the oppressed must free both himself and the oppressor.

It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free the oppressors. The latter, as an oppressive class, can free neither others nor themselves.⁴²

On the question of violence Freire presented the following thoughts.

Never in history has violence been initiated by the oppressed. How could they be initiators, if they themselves are the result of violence? How could

⁴¹Ibid., p. 40.

⁴²Ibid., p. 42.

they be the sponsors of something whose objective inaugurated forth their existence as oppressed? There would be no oppressed had there been no prior situation of violence to establish their subjugation.⁴³

Within this context, violence is nullified by the fact that the oppressed are weak, emasculated and psychologically dependent upon the oppressor. They are in actuality, semi-human beings due to the loss of respect normally granted to all humans. They have acquired a low self-esteem that enables the oppressor to continue to enslave them. The minds of the oppressed are fixed in the quicksand of oppressor psychology which has rendered them fruitless and placed them into the category of "things."

Freire also considered the value of education regarding liberation and was particularly critical of one educational form. The "banking" concept of education consists of recording, memorizing and regurgitation. The real meaning of the concepts allude the students and, therefore, thinking does not take place. Freire has made the observation that students educate the teacher and that a student is more than a receptacle; he or she is a thinking being. Freire states it in this manner.

(a) The teacher teaches and the students are taught.

⁴³Ibid., p. 41.

- (b) The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing.
- (c) The teacher thinks and the students are thought about.
- (d) The teacher talks and the students listen-meekly.
- (e) The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplines.
- (f) The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply.
- (g) The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher.
- (h) The teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it.
- (i) The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students.
- (j) The teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.⁴⁴

If the students are caught in the net of the "banking" form of education, then thinking is negated. If thinking is negated, then oppression continues to run rampant throughout the country. Therefore, "banking" education could not be utilized in the process of liberation. Freire argues for authentic thinking. The following serves to clarify this concept.

Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory towers isolation, but only in communication.⁴⁵

Freire advocates the dialogue teaching model which does not isolate the students from the teacher, but seeks to incorporate both the student and the teacher into a wholistic pattern. The teacher is no longer solely the one who teaches, but is a teacher-student;

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 59.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 64.

the students are no longer students for they become student-teachers. Both parties become jointly responsible for the learning process.

It is through the dialogical method that peasants are taught to think positively in the area of liberation. Through this method they become aware of their environment socially, politically and economically, and then seek to transform it into a livable environment.

The central concern of Paulo Freire was to make the people aware of the society in which they live through the process of dialogue education. Therefore, for Freire, by raising the consciousness level of the people political emancipation will follow. It is possible that, by utilizing this precept of Freire and by raising the consciousness level of the people, political emancipation will follow.

DOROTHEE SOELLE

In her book, Political Theology, Dorothee Soelle asserts numerous positive ideas. It would perhaps seem adequate to compare her works with the best of those in the field of political theology. Nevertheless, I have chosen to deal with a Christological discourse which I consider vital to the oppressed person.

In the arena of Churchanity, the name of Jesus

reigns supreme for the oppressed. It signifies the essence of the son of God in both sacred and secular aspects. Dorothee Soelle described this sacred-secular blend when she stated, "The language of Jesus is always both religious and political."⁴⁶ To Soelle the gospel has political relevance. However, the central theme of this section is the political Jesus. It is not necessary to discern in the theological sense the structure of the society in which Jesus lived. An attempt to credit political theology through exegetical study or the New Testament is not important to show that Jesus was a political figure. Dorothee Soelle asserts the following:

It cannot be overlooked that, in an indirect sense, the manner in which Jesus thought and acted de facto broke open and transformed the social structure of the world in which he lived.⁴⁷

Jesus did not adhere to social classifications. People were treated identically without regard for their social position or economic prosperity. Soelle has defined the essence of the political Jesus.

Today we are able to formulate more precisely the conditions under which authority can be seen through, controlled and ultimately destroyed.⁴⁸

Perhaps this is vital to the oppressed as no

⁴⁶Dorothee Soelle, Political Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), p. 36.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 65.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 67.

regime can stay in power indefinitely. Eventually it will be destroyed. Soelle unveils a morsel of hidden truth in the following statement.

Our problem today is no longer the undisguised but the hidden forms of exploitation, which conceal them among apparent freedoms, for example, the freedom to consume whenever, wherever, and whatever quantity possible.⁴⁹

This is part of the hidden problem of political emancipation. It appears that oppressed people are free, but freedom has its limitations. The question is one of freedom versus emancipation and the concepts are totally different. Freedom is beyond emancipation. No one in society has this luxurious commodity.

Then what is the political Jesus? He formulated within his personality the treatment of all people in the same manner. He thus tore away the bonds of status and economical wealth to gain entrance to the human being.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer has further elaborated on this thought.

For your thought and action will enter on a new relationship; your thinking will be confined to your responsibilities in action. With us thought was often a luxury of the onlooker; with you it will be entirely subordinated to action.⁵⁰

The problem of political emancipation is an on-going search and there are no easy answers. The process is detailed, analytical and complicated.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 69.

⁵⁰Ibid.

Nevertheless, one must ponder the alternatives. Concrete social philosophy must exist within the parameters of a reality viewed within a societal context or it will reside in utopia. The need for action compounds the problem because thought before action is necessary to avoid the pitfalls of unnecessary error.

The ultimate question is still present and unavoidable. Can political emancipation be achieved in this worldly context? Judging from Karl Marx and Lenin, the practical aspects of these various ideologies serve to confirm the fogginess of the concepts, and shed light on the problematical circumstances revolving around political emancipation. Marx dealt primarily with thought minus action (in terms of political emancipation). Lenin dealt with the reality of the revolution and encountered numerous inbred obstacles that hampered the cause.

But in this discussion of political emancipation pluralism must also be explored. The oppressed in the United States are pluralistic in terms of ideologies and there must be a fiber by which the ideologies can be joined. The problem is one of locating a central rallying theme for the oppressed, enabling them to become a unified, wholistic unit. Perhaps Lenin forgot or omitted the most important facet of revolution, education the oppressed for freedom.

When we look at the poverty dilemma, the unemployment among minorities, and the hunger issue, we realize that behind all of these problems one segment of society is guilty of malpractice and injustice. The struggle among minorities has switched from demonstrations to the political arena. Black theologians must formulate ethical guidelines which are now lacking to influence the activities of politicians.

The adaptation and modification of the model presented by Paulo Freire in Pedagogy of the Oppressed provides the basic foundation for the model of political action to be discussed in the next chapter. Dorothee Soelle provides the theological legitimization for the Black church through the medium of the political Jesus. The theories of Marx and Lenin which seek to overthrow the government and replace it with a different order are also relevant. But there are some differences between the theories explored here and the model which is drawn.

Marx and Lenin sought to overthrow the existing order and were opposed to Christianity. The model for political action proposed here seeks to function within the parameters of the government and not to abolish it. Further, in their rejection of Christianity, the theories of Marx and Lenin are diametrically opposed to the needs of Blacks in formulating a plan for action.

Chapter 4

MODEL FOR POLITICAL ACTION

The history of Black people in America has been plagued by slavery, racism, oppression, injustice and economic deprivation. Throughout the bloody segments of Black history, Black leaders have sought some vehicle to eradicate the suffering of the lost, found "tribe of Israel." From Richard Allen and the A.M.E. church to Jesse Jackson and Operation Push, Black leaders have given their lives and God given talents to the relief of oppression.

To Black people God has always been interpreted as a powerful, majestic force to be dealt with through fear and trembling. Black leaders have always been portrayed as the Old Testament prophets. William Still called Harriet Tubman "Moses;" Martin Luther King Jr. was called "Black Moses" or "Moses;" the Exodus symbolized the story of Black hope as manifested in the sermons of Black slave preachers. James Weldon Johnson in God's Trombones records a sermon titled, "Let My People Go."

This tradition continues as an important part of Black culture. It is known among scholars and by common people alike that Black people believe that one

day God will deliver them from the hands of the oppressor. Religion is the medium whereby this hope is expressed and it supplies the ability to walk through oppression, injustice and discrimination singing, "We come this far by faith, leaning on the Lord."

In this final chapter I will illustrate the various programs for political action brought forth by Dr. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Jesse L. Jackson. I will not discuss the internal conflicts between these leaders, nor will I give a detailed analysis of each program. But I will examine the economic-political contributions made by these leaders and analyze the three programs to show similarities and differences regarding them and my program for political action.

THE POLITICAL PROGRAM OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was the drum major of political movements in Black history. The efficiency of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was at its peak under his leadership. No political program formulated by Black people can overlook the progress brought forth by Dr. King's SCLC.

The purpose of the SCLC was to exercise non-violent resistance throughout the nation as a means of effecting social change. The SCLC was a separate movement from the church in terms of physical location.

However, it existed as a part of the church because it encompassed the major Black church leaders in the nation.

A primary goal of the SCLC was to transform laws that discriminated against Black people. Segregation was the main problem and it was coated with the point of overt racism which people could readily identify. The resolution was the enactment of civil rights legislation which transformed society.

Operation Breadbasket was created to upgrade the economic status of Black people in the United States and was a departure within the SCLC. David L. Lewis explains:

Jobs were henceforth the paramount goal, and operation Breadbasket was to carry the major responsibility for achieving breakthroughs in the hiring of the disadvantaged by commerce and industry.⁵¹

Operation Breadbasket was a success in Atlanta, prompting Dr. King to apply this program in Chicago. According to Lewis:

Martin told the ministers that this drive must begin immediately under the auspices of Operation Breadbasket. The objective was to increase the income of Chicago's blacks by some \$50 million. If the sum seemed unrealistic, he said, he was able to cite the remarkable accomplishments of the Atlanta Operation Breadbasket, which had augmented minority incomes by nearly \$20 million over a two-and-a-half year period, although this was probably

⁵¹David L. Lewis, King A Critical Biography (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 355.

due not entirely to the labors of the SCLC, but to the remarkable growth of Atlanta.⁵²

Thus King ventured into the arena of economic deprivation on the national level. He recognized that, in the United States, the have's and the have nots should be involved in direct confrontation through non-violent demonstrations. At this point Dr. King was on the threshold of uniting this nation's entire Third World. Peter Paris suggests the importance of Operation Breadbasket as the means to the end of economic oppression.

He (King) saw Operation Breadbasket, the economic arm of the SCLC, as the institutional embodiment of the combined techniques of organized labor and nonviolent resistance.⁵³

King also proposed a bill which would aid the disadvantaged and make the question of economic justice a major priority.

Since he viewed economic injustice as a moral problem, he viewed its solution as a means to restore a broken community. Not only blacks but many whites were poor also and many other minority groups suffered from poverty. King's efforts in the area of economic justice were aimed at poverty everywhere in the land and not just at poverty among blacks.⁵⁴

Dr. King's efforts to eradicate poverty went

⁵²Ibid., p. 317.

⁵³Peter J. Paris, Black Leaders in Conflict (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1978), p. 107.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 108.

beyond the walls of the Black community into the camps of other minorities. The vehicle he created and utilized to achieve economic growth accomplished the task. Rev. Jesse L. Jackson would eventually resign from Operation Breadbasket after the death of Dr. King and establish Operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity).

THE POLITICAL PROGRAM OF MALCOLM X

Malcolm X served as the second most important spokesman for the Nation of Islam under the direction of Elijah Muhammad. Malcolm was a vital part of a separatist organization which believed in the inferiority of the white race. This belief was based on the utilization of Yacub's theory which stated that white people were created by a scientist named Yacub. Yacub, it is believed, began breeding Blacks with Blacks until he finally created a white person. Malcolm eventually abandoned these teachings and formulated his own organization prior to his death.

The Muslim organization believed that Black people should separate themselves from white society, therefore forming a Black American within white America. Malcolm X suggested that the road to rehabilitation for Blacks in America was a complicated task, extending beyond the social-political-economic sphere into the

understanding of the self. Peter J. Paris elaborates:

Malcolm reasoned that the problem facing Blacks in this century was two-fold. One the one hand, the whites were systematic and oppression has to be stopped by any means necessary. But on the other hand, Blacks were victims of that oppression not only politically, economically and socially but also in terms of their own self-understanding.⁵⁵

When Malcolm X split from the Nation of Islam he formulated the Organization of Afro-American Unity. In the social-political-economic arena, Malcolm adhered to two major policies which could transform Black society. They are stated in the Autobiography of Malcolm X by Alex Haley.

In New York City, with over a million Negroes, there aren't twenty black-owned business employing over ten people. It's because black men don't own and control their own community's retail establishments that they can't stabilize their own community . . . A ten million black vote bloc could be the deciding balance of power in American politics, because the white man's vote is almost always evenly divided. The polls are the one place where every black man could fight the black man's cause with dignity.⁵⁶

Malcolm X suggests two important concepts which Black society should utilize: (1) increase Black business and (2) formulate a solid political bloc to swing elections. These are major contributions to the Black cause and have been adopted by some Black communities--Warren, Ohio and Nashville, Tennessee among

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 156.

⁵⁶Alex Haley, The Autobiography of Malcolm X (New York: Grove Press, 1966), p. 313.

them. The theories of Black capitalism and Black politics expounded by Malcolm X are undergirded by a true understanding of the oppression Black people have suffered and the reasons for internal conflict among Black people.

THE POLITICAL PROGRAM OF JESSE L. JACKSON

People United to Save Humanity, commonly referred to as PUSH, was founded by the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson (the "country preacher") after his resignation from Operation Breadbasket. This movement is designed to upgrade the economic standards of Blacks in the nation. However, it has incorporated so many other causes into its framework that Barbara Reynolds refers to it as a "multi-faceted crisis center."⁵⁷ She lists the fifteen aims of Operation PUSH as follows:

1. PUSH for a comprehensive economic plan for development of black and poor people. This plan will include status as underdeveloped enclaves entitled to consideration by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (development of a plan to finance and share in the equal system for distribution of wealth.)
2. PUSH for humane alternatives to the welfare system (money) invested in education of the mind will generate productivity over and against long term welfare dependency. e.g., \$25,000 for education per person will produce

⁵⁷ Barbara A. Reynolds, Jesse Jackson The Man The Movement The Myth (Chicago: Hall, 1975), p. 277.

approximately \$300,000 earning power over a 20-year period rather than expenses of \$100,000-at \$5,000 a year for 20 years in welfare payments.

3. PUSH for the revival of the labor movement to protect organized workers and to organize un-organized workers.
4. PUSH for a survival Bill of Rights for all children up to the age of eighteen guaranteeing their food, clothing, shelter, medical care and education.
5. PUSH for a survival Bill of Rights for the aging guaranteeing adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care and meaningful programs.
6. PUSH for full political participation including automatic voter registration as a right of citizenship.
7. PUSH to elect to local, state and federal office persons committed to humane economic and social programs.
8. PUSH for humane conditions in prisons and sound rehabilitation programs.
9. PUSH for a Bill of Rights for veterans whose needs are ignored.
10. PUSH for adequate health care for all people based upon need.
11. PUSH for quality education regardless of race, religion or creed.
12. PUSH for economic and social relationships with the nations of Africa in order to build African-Afro-American unity.
13. PUSH for national unity among all organizations working for the humane economic, political and social development of people.
14. PUSH for a relevant theology geared to re-generating depressed and oppressed peoples.

15. PUSH for black excellence.⁵⁸

Jackson is engaged in a variety of social, political and economic activities. He has become a national figure and has helped many blacks in this nation in the areas of black business, employment, political planning, school desegregation and self-image.

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM FOR POLITICAL ACTION

The primary function of the program for political action outlined here is to establish a black community which can sustain itself without the aid of white society. Oppression, injustice and discrimination on the part of some whites have made it necessary for Blacks to withdraw from the larger context of society. Thus, by a sustaining Black community established through the medium of Black churches in a community, Black capitalism would be the impetus of survival for Black people.

In a society where morals are changing and various oppressive groups are on the rise, it is pointless for Black people to become a part of the society. It is far better to separate from the society, establish Black capitalism, and heal the wounds incurred by being active participants in a society that changes every ten years. This proposal is not a nation-wide attempt to

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 277-280.

establish a Black empire or Mecca. It is imperative that Blacks establish economic sustainability because rioting and marches are now a part of history. The social consciousness of some whites has changed radically from sympathetic to reverse racism. This program seeks to rectify the oppressive structures of a given community through four criteria: (1) political affairs, (2) economic affairs, (3) social affairs, and (4) education.

THE PURPOSE OF THE ALLIANCE

In most cities of the United States a Black clergymen's association is operating to help Black people gain employment, voting rights, and other credentials of full citizenship. In this program for political action, such persons would serve as the leaders of the alliance in the political arena. The alliance will seek to formulate organizations to facilitate goals and standards for Blacks. The alliance is not an integrated group of ministers in the community; it is a group of Black ministers seeking to upgrade the social-political-economic standards of its Black people.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE ALLIANCE

The requirements for membership in the alliance are as follows:

- (1) Be an ordained minister of the gospel and recognized by an established church.
- (2) Be socially conscious of the plight of Black people and willing to work for the resolution of these problems.

THE DIVISION OF LABOR IN THE ALLIANCE

President: This office would be held by the most influential pastor in the city. The purpose of this office will be to provide leadership and facilitate decision making in conjunction with the President's Council.

Secretary: Keeps accurate records of all meetings and procedures and gives a reading at each meeting.

Treasurer: Maintains records of all financial transactions and reports at each meeting.

Established

Committees: Perhaps the most important functioning mechanism in the Alliance. Four committees chaired by persons with specific expertise serve as leaders and advisors to the president. These committee areas are: (1) Social Affairs, (2) Political Affairs, (3) Economic Affairs and (4) Education.

Advisors: From the Black professional ranks will be enlisted advisors to serve on various committees.

Members: Each member of the alliance will be requested to serve on at least one committee. The members will also be required to become proficient in their respective areas.

Projects: Each committee will be responsible for various projects. As an example: The Political Affairs committee would be responsible for suggesting political candidates for office, for organizing political rallies, for conducting voter registration classes, for encouraging voter registration, and for transporting voters to the polls.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF BLACK CAPITALISM

Arthur L. Tolson identifies the period before the emergence of Black capitalism as the pre-Civil War and the post Civil War years. He emphasizes the small scale from which Black capitalism emerged in the 1880's. Black capitalism grew out of the free-man ethos in the North and South where blacks were trained primarily in skilled trades rather than in the academic disciplines. Tolson cites the following statistics which applied prior to the Civil War.

. . . in 1861, the wealth of the free Blacks was estimated at fifty million dollars. Half of this amount was in the South, and the other half was concentrated in the North and West.⁵⁹

After the Civil War Blacks participated in stealing land from whites, causing insurrections and prompting eight southern states to enact a series of Black Codes in 1865. The purpose of these codes was to limit the property rights of Blacks in the South. In 1895, Booker T. Washington urged Black people to invest in Black capitalism. Although Washington had a conciliatory attitude toward racism, he cultivated Black business. W. E. B. Dubois also favored Black capitalism. Tolson notes the growth and development

⁵⁹ Arthur L. Tolson, "Historical and Modern Trends in Black Capitalism", Black Scholar VI (April 1975), 10.

of Black business from 1898 to 1969.

Black business grew from about 30,000 firms in 1898 to the 163,000 firms in existence in 1969, an increase of approximately 133,000.⁶⁰

The future of Black capitalism depends on either diversification or a gradual integration. Tolson elaborates:

As to whether black capitalism can maintain itself through diversification as suggested by Dr. Brimmer or through gradual integration into the mainstream of the United States economy as proposed by Mr. Burrell, only time will decide its final disposition.⁶¹

Black capitalism is faced with an uncertain future and the individual status of income heightens the sense of urgency on the behalf of Blacks regarding immediate action.

INDIVIDUAL EARNINGS

It is extremely difficult to determine the economic resources of the Black community in a given area. However, a genuine study of the process of (legal) individual earnings can be estimated by statistics. Robert Hill has determined the following:

By 1975 black men had earnings that were two-thirds that of white men, up from 61 percent in 1969. Similarly, black women had three-fourths of the earnings of white women in 1969 but, by 1975, black

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 12.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 13.

women's earnings were almost (97 percent) equal to that of white women.⁶²

Hill discusses the decline in Black employment and the increase in white employment. He estimates that the actual number of unemployed Blacks in the United States is 3.1 million, due primarily to the rise of white multiple earners.

Thus, the disproportionate increase of white women in the labor force has resulted in white families, for the first time, having a higher proportion of multiple earners than black families.⁶³

Hill's analysis supports the rationale for establishing Black capitalism as a means of avoiding the collapse of the Black economy. However, Walter Bremond says:

Some five million blacks collect some form of public welfare and there is a 9.5% unemployment rate for blacks.⁶⁴ Black median income is only 59% of that of whites.

King E. Davis cites the following:

However, in the five year span between 1970 and 1975, the percentage of black families earning over \$15,000 increased by only 5.5%⁶⁵

⁶²Robert Hill, "The Illusion of Black Progress," Black Scholar X (October 1978), 24.

⁶³Ibid., p. 49.

⁶⁴Walter Bremond, "The National Black United Fund Movement," Black Scholar VII (March 1976), 11.

⁶⁵King E. Davis, "Socio-Economic Feasibility of Black Fund Raising," Black Scholar VII (March 1976), 19.

The preceeding analyses by Hill, Bremond and Davis indicate the rise and fall of the over all economy and seek to evaluate the progress of Black people within the economic system. These studies do not indicate geographical regions of the country, but provide an over all perspective of the Black economic plight.

According to Hill, Black people have endured five recessions in two decades.

In fact, over the past two decades, this country has had at least five recessions: 1953-54, 1957-58, 1969-71 and 1974-75.⁶⁶

But King E. Davis provides a different analysis. He submits that, of the total of one billion dollars attributed to Blacks in 1974, it is estimated that roughly 75-80 percent was contributed to religious organizations, principally to Black churches.⁶⁷

It is apparent that statistics fail to accurately reflect the total, individual income of Blacks. Hill cites a recession in 1974, while Davis credits the Black church with 75-80% of a billion dollars. This shows the inadequacy of statistics to determine the essence of Black capitalism and the needs of Black people. The primary reason for this is that Blacks seldom reveal all of their assets to an interviewer, and some refuse to accurately fill out a questionnaire.

⁶⁶Hill, p. 20.

⁶⁷Davis, p. 20.

Therefore, it is difficult to determine the exact amount of capitalism within the Black community. However, Davis is perhaps accurate in his assessment that one billion dollars was given to Black churches in 1974. Based on Davis's analysis, the means for establishing Black capitalism through the Black church will be investigated.

METHODS FOR ESTABLISHING BLACK CAPITALISM

There are various methods for establishing Black capitalism through the Black church. The most effective methods are (1) social functions--teas, dinners, barbecues, fish fries, bake sales and the Richardson Birthday Club Plan; (2) the 10-36 Plan devised by Rev. Leon H. Sullivan; and (3) special collections and Bremond's fund raising suggestions. Historically, all of these plans have proven effective.

The social functions usually take the form of a dinner or the sale of some commodity to the general public. Usually the social function is a successful fund raiser and it is the oldest form of fund raising in the Black church, with the exception of the collection.

The Richardson Birthday Club Plan requires the participation of the entire church membership. The members are divided into groups according to their birthdates. The groups then form individual

organizations. Each member is asked to invest one dollar per week for a given person. The organizational chart appears as follows:

Name of the Month Birthday Club
 President - Presides at the meetings.
 Vice-President - Organizes activities.
 Secretary - Records minutes.
 Treasurer - Collects one dollar from each member per week.
 Members - Participate in activities of the club.⁶⁸

At each monthly business meeting the treasurers of the birthday clubs report on the amount of money collected. The treasurer representing the birthday club with the highest amount wins the trophy for the month.

The Richardson Birthday Club Plan is a combination of the social function and the collection. Each club has its own dinners, teas and song fests. However, they are not permitted to solicit the general public. Socializing remains within the church family. It is the responsibility of the treasurer of a given club to collect the money from the members. Therefore, the function of collection takes place on a small scale. The Richardson Birthday Club Plan successfully paid off a \$185,000 mortgage on the Friendship Baptist Church in Warren, Ohio.

Rev. Leon H. Sullivan, pastor of the Zion Baptist Church of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is the

⁶⁸William K. Richardson, Interview, Fall of 1972.

author of the 10-36 Plan which led to that congregation's purchase of an apartment house. Floyd Massey and Samuel McKinney have written about this plan.

Leon H. Sullivan's Zion Baptist Church of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, demonstrated what a Black church could do by marshaling its economic resources. The "10-36 Plan" was born when the Reverend Sullivan asked the members who would be willing to invest \$10 per month for thirty-six months to remain after church. Two hundred people signed up as investors.

One day a young couple confronted Leon Sullivan with the fact of discrimination they encountered when attempting to rent an apartment. The Zion Associates Corporation, the cooperative launched by the "10-36 Plan," bought the apartment house and mandated "open occupancy." This is the direction in which black churches must move.⁶⁹

The fourth most effective means of establishing Black capitalism is the special collection. In this plan the minister announces a "Special Collection" on a given Sunday, well in advance of that day. The minister will usually have some special purpose for this giving, a purpose which carries some emotional freight. (A collection for a retired missionary, a child in need of a serious operation, or a family in financial despair.

Bremond suggests still other methods of successful raising on the local level.

1. The use of sound fund raising case statements.
2. The use of payroll deduction systems.

⁶⁹Floyd Massey Jr. & Samuel Berry McKinney, Church Administration in the Black Perspective (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1976), p. 100.

3. The use of special events which utilize the concern and good will of black entertainers and professionals to celebrate and reward those black individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the development of black communities.
4. The use of creative public relations and advertising.
5. The use of a participatory planning distribution system (allocation and budgeting)
6. The use of a social planning apparatus which documents needs.
7. The use of volunteers.
8. The use of parlor meetings.
9. The use of all of those techniques that are required: planning, timing, leadership, grantsmanship, constituency building, interpretation, follow-up and follow-through, reporting to the people with published C.P.A. audits, radio and TV, public service and research and analysis.⁷⁰

These methods have been proved effective when applied to a given situation. It is possible to utilize two or three simultaneously. For example: the Bremond inspired entertainer and professional benefit show provides a service for the people and a method of fund raising. The special collection rewards the individual with the feeling that, "I have helped someone." The 10-36 Plan rewards the individual with a concrete example of accomplishment.

THE FUNCTION OF BLACK CAPITALISM

The program for political action is built on the foundation of black capitalism. In many segments of the program volunteers are utilized to perform certain

⁷⁰Bremond, pp. 11-12.

duties, such as volunteer teachers at evening, adult schools. In other segments of the program, goods and services are provided, such as the day care centers or the skilled trades centers. However, the fundamental principle of controlling the flow of money in the Black community is a perplexing problem.

The program for political action provides a starting point. It is not a string of ideas thoughtlessly thrown together; it is the process of economic mitosis in stages. Perhaps no other black institution could formulate Black capitalism with the speed and efficiency of the Black church. The program for political action should be located in an industrial environment. (It is not designed for rural areas.) It needs the revenues of large industrial companies such as General Motors or McDonnell Douglass.

Black capitalism used in the program for political action seeks to reverse the oppressive definition of capitalism. According to Theodore L. Cross:

Black capitalism is the strategy which urges creation of new jobs and profit centers inside ghetto areas. The program also seeks to transfer the ownership of ghetto business from white to black control, at the same time building in the ghetto new banks, insurance companies, production and service facilities.⁷¹

Therefore, Black capitalism differs from capitalism in

⁷¹Tolson, p. 6, 9.

that it seeks to gain power to control one's own neighborhood. Capitalism seeks to control nations and parts of the world, basically by exploitation.

In the program for political action, Black capitalism functions as a means to an end. It does not seek to control anything beyond the parimeters of its immediate environs.

THE BLACK CREDIT UNION

In order to formulate Black capitalism, the program for political action calls for the establishment of a Black credit union in the area. Funds for establishing this union can be procured by the utilization of one of the methods previously proposed for establishing Black capitalism.

The credit union should be established during a peak economic period and sustained throughout the various recessions. This can be accomplished through regular audits and by hiring a collection agency to handle delinquent accounts. Massey and McKinney stress the importance of Black churches establishing credit unions.:

Every black church with five hundred or more members should organize a credit union. Churches with fewer than five hundred members should link themselves together to offer to their congregants economic alternatives. A credit union is one of the best examples of "applied Christianity," for it facilitates the ego-raising dignity of a good

credit rating. Credit unions enable people to consolidate bills, educate their children, make home improvements, support the "special needs" of the church, and meet other goals.⁷²

Within the program for political action, the credit union is the first step in assuring Black capitalism. It proceeds from this base to establish other business interests.

THE UNITED COUNCIL

An integral part of this program would be the United Council. The Council will be composed of four persons representing three different perspectives. Two of these persons would be from colleges and the others would be drawn from the Alliance (Black clergy) and from Black businessmen and professionals. The United Council will coordinate dialogue with other groups such as the women's group, political parties, the NAACP, SCLC, the Muslim organization and Operation PUSH. This policy of dialogue would be rigorously enforced to avoid isolation and separatism. The purpose of this model is to utilize existing resources, not to foster separation from other Black organizations.

The final responsibility of the United Council will be to initiate dialogue with foreign Black countries experiencing white oppression. This will take

⁷²Massey & McKinney, p. 100.

the form of written communications and two yearly visits. The council will elect two members to visit the countries and enter into dialogue with the religious leaders there. The main purpose is to attempt to offer aid and consolation to other oppressed groups in the world. The cost for this project would be covered by special collections.

THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

The process of selecting and supporting political candidates should be handled by the United Council. People desiring to run for election will submit to the scrutiny of the Council. The Council will then instruct the Alliance regarding preparations for the political campaign. The Alliance will supply the churches as meeting places and black professionals will aid in speech writing and economic and political research. Churches will help by raising the consciousness of the people through voter education classes and through voter registration. The city-wide men's and women's clubs will organize fund raising banquets. Commuting college students will be encouraged to aid the campaign by passing out pamphlets and other materials. Black businessmen's associations would provide the necessary funds for the printing of pamphlets.

Transportation to and from the polls would be

provided by Black businessmen and Black churches in the city. Black churches will also sponsor political rallies. Finally, it is necessary that dialogues take place between Black and White candidates, perhaps in the form of debates or discussion groups. These dialogues would be aired through the media for both communities to hear.

COMMUNITY ACTION

To succeed in political action, the Alliance and the United Council must encourage community action and participation with whites. They must attend council meetings at City Halls, and they must vote in a unified bloc to formulate political power. By massing a political power bloc the Black community will be able to swing elections. Given this decisive power, the white community will come to the Black community in larger numbers for support. Therefore, the Alliance must enter into dialogue with the White ministers' association. This action will show openness on the part of Blacks and it will also enable Blacks to defeat oppressive legislation.

It is imperative that the United Council and the Alliance stay in constant contact with the Black community. The pastor of each church is encouraged to make a contract with every member of his or her congregation to ensure community support. Pastors are also

encouraged to invite families within their congregations to dinner, at the pastor's home, on a weekly basis.

Black preachers would be requested to encourage their members to patronize Black owned and operated businesses in the area. Black preachers in the area would also be required to patronize Black businesses. Black businessmen would then divide up according to the number of churches and pay thithes on their profits to the said churches in the United Council.

Once this has been attained we move to step two.

EDUCATION

The question of education as the topic of the "Great Debate" between DuBois and Washington. DuBois argued for the training of Blacks in the academic disciplines. Washington argued for the training of Blacks in industry. Later Martin Luther King Jr. advocated both academic and skilled trades. With Black capitalism functioning properly within the Black community, improvement in the quality of education receives the attention of the Alliance. The first step is to establish a night school for persons in the community who have not completed high school. This school will consist of volunteers from the teaching profession working three nights weekly for one year on a rotating basis. The school

would be established in one of the local churches which would serve as host for a period of one year.

The United Council and the Alliance would then turn to the second step of the educational process. This step would seek to aid college students both financially and culturally. The Alliance would encourage all Black youth of college age to establish an organization for the purpose of cultural enrichment. This group would then host the summer activities of teenagers and junior high youth in the city. All college youth would be involved in some capacity. Therefore, the United Council would provide summer employment to Black college youth. Each church would be responsible for paying the tuition of the college youth in its congregation, provided that the youth maintained a C average or better. The commuting college students are also responsible for tutoring students during the year. This project would be funded by a benefit ball highlighted by Black entertainers.

The third step in the educational process would consist of establishing a school for the teaching of skilled trades. This school would be supported by the United Council and the Alliance and would train young men and women in skilled trades. The goal would be the gainful employment of these persons in industry.

Black businessmen could then employ some of the students, providing income and on the job training.

Again, each individual church would respond according to the number of students from each congregation.

The fourth step would be to establish a day care center in one of the churches to serve working parents. The United Council would establish the wages and determine the number of persons necessary to staff the facility.

The fifth step in the educational process would consist of a drug rehabilitation center sponsored by the United Council and the local Muslim organization. Together these two entities would work to eradicate the spread of drugs and to rehabilitate the addicted. After completing the drug rehabilitation program, persons would then be placed in some area of the work force and prepared to reenter society. Toward this purpose, a staff of social workers would be hired by the United Council to aid in rehabilitation.

The sixth step in the educational process would consist of a voter education class. This class would be sponsored by each church in the alliance. Every member of every church would be required to spend one "semester" in this class, and a certificate would be given to each person upon completion of the course. The courses would be taught by volunteer professionals from each congregation.

Finally, adult Sunday school classes will

operate from the following premise by Freire: Adults are not to be treated as children in the learning process. Preferably, the adult Sunday school would begin with the Old Testament.

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR THE OPPRESSED

The phrase Christian education for the oppressed is a combination of three components. First, it will seek to instill pride in the heritage of a broken people. This can be accomplished through discussions of various topics that touch upon some connective point between the history of Israel and the history of the Black church. It would be illustrated that the world view of Black people is commensurate with the world view of the Old Testament.

Secondly, the Prophetic Covenant Law Suite Tradition, by Jim A. Sanders, taken from Torah and Canon, would serve as a discussion starter.⁷³

The Prophet Story: The Court Officer

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1a. Autobiographic material | The prophet's call |
| 1b. Biographic material | and Credentials |

Israel's Story

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 2a. Epic traditions | Israel's Call and |
| 2b. Other history | Credentials |

⁷³James A. Sanders, Torah and Canon (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 75.

Hope in Reformation: The Prophet as Mediator

- 3a. Pleas to people to repent
- 3b. Pleas to God to relent

Judgment: The Prophet as Messenger

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 4. Indictments | Reasons for Judgment |
| 5. Sentences | Judgment |

Hope in Transformation: The Prophet as Evangelist

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 6. Transformation | Purpose for Judgment |
| 7. Restoration | Israel's new call and credentials |

The third item or tool would be the Bible or the Old Testament cooperatively with the Prophetic Covenant Law Suite tradition. These three tools are necessary for the class to properly function. In relating the various steps of the Covenant to the passages of scripture, one begins to understand God in a different perspective.

METHOD FOR TEACHING ADULTS

The method for teaching adults should proceed from the church, with Black professionals instructing them. The classes should be taught in small groups--no more than ten persons in a group. Classes should consist of reading and discussion, lectures, and a report reflecting the individual research of each adult. The class should conclude with a certificate for completing the course and a course evaluation session.

SIMILARITIES IN THE PROGRAM

The apparent similarities in the programs of Dr. King, Malcolm X and Jesse Jackson and the Cole Program for political action are as follows:

- (1) Each movement sought to transform the economic deprivation of Black people in the United States.
- (2) Each movement attempted to heal the wounds of Black people brought about by oppression, racism and injustice.
- (3) All of the movements originated out of the framework of the Black church.
- (4) All of the movements are political in terms of acquiring the vote, utilizing the ballot, and supporting candidates.
- (5) All four movements were created by Black preachers.

DIFFERENCES IN THE PROGRAMS

The major differences in the programs are as follows:

- (1) Dr. King, Malcolm X and Jesse Jackson are all national figures. The Cole program is designed for the Black communities individually, not for the nation.
- (2) The other programs have been tested; the Cole program has not.
- (3) The historical settings are radically different. Dr. King's setting was the 1950's and 1960's. Malcolm X was a prominent voice during the 1960's. Jesse Jackson studied during the 1960's and became a national figure in the 1970's. The Cole program originated in 1979, designed for the 1980's.

- (4) Dr. King was an integrationist. Malcolm X was a separatist. Jesse Jackson is an integrationist. The Cole program advocates both integration and separation.

CONCLUSION

The program for political action is designed for a Black community (not the nation) which is aware of the social, political and economic problems of the 1980's. It seeks to challenge the existing structures of economic deprivation and political laxity on behalf of White America. It challenges this nation to live up to its claim of freedom and justice for all. The program seeks to achieve these goals not by integration alone, but by separatism as well.

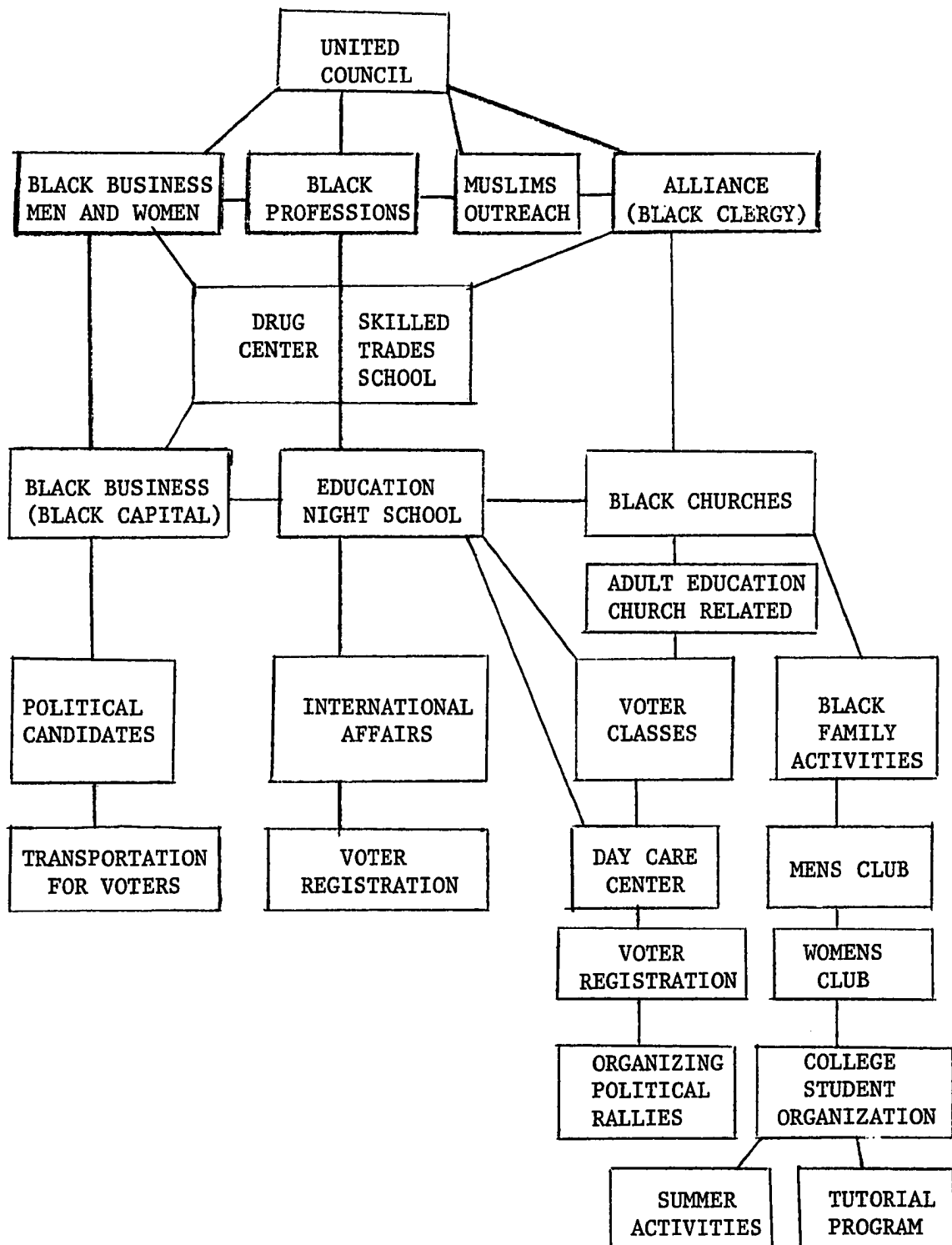
The days of marching for civil rights and of peaceful demonstrations are over; these methods are no longer new or phenomenal and are being utilized by various other groups. It is time for Black people to formulate a "Peoplehood" and control their own communities. No longer should Blacks be the "last hired and the first fired." Blacks should formulate Black capitalism and seek to control the cash flow of their own communities. Blacks should establish a political bloc to attain political power as suggested by Malcolm X. Blacks should strive for excellence as suggested by Rev. Jesse Jackson. Blacks should remain non-violent as suggested by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This program

for political action has sought to demonstrate the mechanics for obtaining the autonomous power to control where one lives.

The future of the Black masses in the United States depends on economic confrontation and achievement. We can no longer survive at the hands of White America. When the minority play-offs begin, Blacks may finish last if we join totally in the game of integration. This program for political action is designed to prevent the 1920's from returning in the 1980's, and it seeks to defend the Black community from utter destruction.

APPENDIX

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



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